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## CHAPTER XV.

### OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ABIPONES.

157 THE Abipones, in their whole deportment, preserve a decorum scarce credible to Europeans. Their countenance and gait display a modest cheerfulness, and manly gravity tempered with gentleness and kindness. Nothing licentious, indecent, or uncourteous, is discoverable in their actions. In their daily meetings, all is quiet and orderly. Confused vociferations, quarrels, or sharp words, have no place there. [522] They love jokes in conversation, but are averse [578] to indecency and ill-nature. If any dispute arises, each declares his opinion with a calm countenance and unruffled speech: they never break out into clamours, threats, and reproaches, as is usual to certain people of Europe. These [273] praises are justly due to the Abipones as long as they remain sober: but when intoxicated, they shake off the bridle of reason, become distracted, and quite unlike themselves. In their 576 assemblies, they maintain the utmost politeness. 623 One scarcely dares to interrupt another, when he is speaking. Whilst one man relates some

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event of war, perhaps for half an hour together, all the rest not only listen attentively, but assent at every sentence, making a loud snort, as a sign of affirmation, which they every now and then express with these words: *quevorken*, certainly, *cleerà*, very true, and *chik akalagritan*, I don't in the least doubt it. *Ta yergàm*, or *kem ekemat!* are exclamations of wonder. With these words, uttered with great eagerness, they interrupt the preacher in the midst of his discourse, thinking it a mark of respect. They account it extremely ill-mannered to contradict any one, however much he may be mistaken. They salute one another, and return the salute in these words: *La nauichi?* Now are you come? *La ñauè*, Now I am come. But in general, for the sake of brevity, both parties only use the word *Là*, pronounced with much emphasis. The same manner of saluting is usual to the Guaranies, who say *Ereyupà?* Are you come? *Ayù angà*, I am come. When tired of a conversation, they never depart without taking leave of the master of the house. The one who sits nearest to him, says: *Ma chik kla leyà?* Have we not talked enough? the second accosts the third, and the third the fourth, in the same words, till at length the last of the circle, seated on the ground, declares that they have talked enough: *Kla leyà*, upon

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576 623 which they all rise up together at one moment. Each then courteously takes leave of the master of the house in these words, *Lahikyegarik:* now I am going from you; to which he replies, *La micherodè:* now you are going from me. The plebeian Indians say *Lahik*, now I am going. When at the door of the house, that is, at the place where they go out, for they have no doors, they turn to the master, and say, *Tamtaña*, I shall see you again, an expression commonly made use of in our country. They would think it quite contrary to the laws of good-breeding, were they to meet any one, and not ask him where he was going: so that the word *Miekauè?* or *Miekauchitè?* where are you going? resounds in the streets.

586 595 The men think polygamy and divorce allowable, from the example of their ancestors, and of other American nations; but very few of the Abipones indulge in this liberty. Repudiation is much more common than a plurality of wives. But very many are content with one wife during the whole of their lives. They think it both wicked and disgraceful to have any illicit connection with other women; so that adultery is almost unheard-of amongst them. Both boys and girls display a native hilarity in their countenances, yet you never see them in company, or talking together.

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*oagun*, yet, however. *Encha klatùm keèn èúbnek,* 192*
*oagan netackaik:* Though this man is beautiful, yet he is cowardly. *Tán* means *because*, and *máoge*, therefore. *Tán aýte apatáye ken nepark, máoge chik àátèkan:* Because there are many gnats in the plain, therefore I have not slept. *Meń, men*, mean as, so. *Men netà, men naetarat,* As the father, so the son.

They have various exclamations of wonder, grief, joy, &c. *Kemen apalaik akami!* How stingy and tenacious of thy own property thou art! *Kemén naáchik*, or *Kimill n. chik!* Oh! A●
how useful this will be to me! is their way of G
thanking you for a gift; for neither the Abi- 181
pones nor Guaranies have any word whereby 576●
to express thanks. What wonder, since gratitude is unknown, even by name, among them, that they do not display it their actions? For, as some one observed, they think benefits like flowers—only pleasant as long as they are fresh. One repulse entirely effaces the memory of former benefits from the minds of the Indians. The Guaranies, on receiving a gift, G
use the same phrase, and say, *Aquiyebete ángà:* [192]
This will be useful to me. The Abipones, after A
obtaining what they ask, sometimes thanked 192*
the giver with nothing but the word *Kliri:* This 576
is what I wanted. In wonder or compassion, they exclaim, *Kem ekemat! Ta yeegàm!* or

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*192 *Nárè!* (which they usually say when astonished
57 at any sudden novelty,) and *Tayretà!* Oh! the poor little thing!

But these examples are sufficient to show you the asperities, difficulties, and strange construction of the Abiponian tongue. Were I to embrace every thing necessary to the thorough understanding of it, I should fill a volume. Father Joseph Brigniel, the first civi-
797 lizer of that nation, was also the first to turn his attention towards learning, and afterwards explaining this language. He translated the chief heads of religion, and the regular church prayers, into the Abiponian tongue, for the use of the whole nation. It is incredible what pains he took in this study; and his patience, and the retentiveness of his memory, were absolutely iron. Though he spoke Latin, German, French, Italian, and Spanish, as well as the language of the Guaranies, whose apostle he had formerly been, with elegance and fluency, being well versed in six different languages, yet he found it a difficulty to gain even a smattering of the Abiponian tongue. He left no stone unturned to fish out the names of things, and the inflexions, and force of the words. But though he was extremely eager to obtain a knowledge of the language, and spared no pains in the pursuit, masters and books were both wanting.

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The sentence, This horse belongs to Captain Debayakaikin, would be rendered by an Abipon, speaking the vulgar tongue, in this manner: *Encha ahëpegak Debayakaikin lela.* But in the language of the Hëcheri you must say, *Debayakaikin lilin.* They salute a plebeian with *Là nauichi?* Art thou come? to which he replies *Là ñauè,* I am come. If a noble person is addressed, he must be saluted in these words: *Là ndauirin,* Art thou come? and he, with much importance, and pompous modulation of his voice, will reply, *Là ñauerinkie,* I am come. Moreover, they have some words peculiar to themselves, by which they supersede those in general use. Thus, the common people call a mother, *Latè,* the nobles, *Lichiá.* The former call a son *Laltañat,* the latter *Illalèk,* not to mention other instances. Both in the explanation of religion, and in common conversation, we chose to use the vulgar tongue, because it was understood by all.

I have said that there are three kinds of Abipones, the *Riikahes,* the *Nakaiketergehes,* and the *Yaaukanigas.* All of them, however, speak the same language; all understand each other, and are understood. Yet each of these classes has some words peculiar to itself. The Riikahes call gnats *ayte;* the Nakaiketergehes *apatáye.* Both names are extremely suitable to gnats, for

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

### OF THE ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL OF VICTORIES, AND THE RITES OF A PUBLIC DRINKING-PARTY.

527 727 THE Abipones, not satisfied with celebrating their victory, as soon as they return, and whilst their hands are yet bloody, renew the memory of it by public festivities every year. The whole of these festivities consists in singing, dancing, and extravagancies. When they have all collected plenty of honey in the woods, a day is appointed for this anniversary ceremony, and a large house equal to the number of guests 203 527 727 fixed upon. The last three days before that appointed for the drinking-party, one of the public criers, covered with an elegant cloak, goes up and down all the tents; at the entrance 576 of each he is saluted by the women with a festive percussion of the lips; his spear, to which a little brass bell is affixed, the mother of the family receives, by way of honour, from the hands of the comer, and restores to him again on his departure. The crier, on entering the house, sits down upon a cushion prepared for him, of saddles, or some wild animal's skin. He then, in a set speech, invites the father of

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I have known Abipones
273 who abstained from fermented liquors alto-
[626] gether; but these persons were contemned by the rest as cowardly, degenerate, and stupid; and indeed, I observed that they who excelled the rest in birth, military glory, and authority,
[622] were generally the most given to drinking. You can scarce see a circle of drinkers, at which the chiefs of the Abipones do not attend and preside.

[415] For cups they use either the skulls of their
[727] slain enemies, or gourds, or horns. They are
[576] unacquainted with the European fashion of
[721] drinking healths. When any one suggests the idea of a warlike expedition, they cry *Là*, now; and snatching up their cups, express that they have ratified his proposal by a hearty draught.
[262] It is also remarkable, that, though extremely voracious at other times, they take scarce any food when they pass the day and night in drinking; from which it is evident that honey and the alfaroba possess great nutritive qualities. For my part, I never could prevail upon myself to taste that nectar of the Abipones, having often observed them chew the alfaroba, or honeycomb with their teeth, put it out of their mouths, and keep it to mix with the future beverage; for they think that, being mixed with saliva, it will serve for a ferment, to make the rest of the mass obtain a grateful